

Fact Sheet 6

Solid Waste Intermodal Transfer Facility

Introduction

Mayor Nickels has asked Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) to move forward with plans to modernize the City's solid waste facilities. These facility improvements, outlined in the *Solid Waste Facilities Master Plan*, will enable SPU to continue providing high quality, reliable solid waste services to its ratepayers in the decades to come. SPU plans to:

- Build a new, state-of-the-art intermodal transfer facility where solid waste collected from homes and businesses can be transferred from collection trucks to shipping containers and then loaded onto trains for shipment to disposal sites; and
- Rebuild two existing transfer stations at their current locations, using additional property adjacent to each site, to improve their customer service and recycling operations.

The preliminary preferred site for the intermodal transfer facility is a 16-acre industrial area between I-5 and the King County International Airport (Boeing Field). This site - called "Corgiat" – is next to S. Corgiat Dr.

The Problem

Seattle's solid waste facilities are old and can longer meet all of Seattle's solid waste needs.



Lines can be up to two hours long at the existing transfer stations

The two existing transfer stations – the North and South Recycling and Disposal Stations - were constructed over 40 years ago. These open-air facilities cannot be modified to control dust and odor completely. They also break down frequently; they are becoming less and less reliable over time.

The stations also lack adequate space for current operations. Crowding at peak times creates long lines for customers, and results in safety risks for employees and customers alike.

Finally, these transfer stations are where SPU currently loads waste from collection trucks into intermodal containers for shipment to a rail yard. But they no longer have sufficient space to provide this critical function, while also providing good customer service and recycling services to self-haul customers.

Why build an intermodal facility?

The construction of a state-of-the-art intermodal transfer facility, located close to rail tracks, is the cornerstone of SPU's plans to upgrade the Seattle's solid waste facilities.

The existing transfer stations were not originally designed to load waste into intermodal shipping containers. Wedging this function into the limited space at these facilities has become increasingly difficult as the number of self-haul customers using the stations has increased, and new services such as yard waste collection and recycling have been added. Seattle needs a separate site in the southern part of the City where solid waste can be prepared for transport to disposal sites.

In the new system, most of the garbage collection trucks will bypass the transfer stations and go directly to the intermodal transfer facility. There, solid waste will be loaded into containers and placed on trains (or another mode of transport) for long haul shipment to disposal facilities.

A new intermodal transfer facility will:

- ensure that solid waste can be shipped out of the City reliably and effectively;
- take pressure off the over-taxed transfer stations so they can serve customers better; and
- improve the City's ability to recycle, recover and reuse materials at the other stations.

How will the new intermodal facility work?

Collection trucks will drive into a large enclosed building and unload their solid waste. The building will have the latest technologies for controlling odor, noise and dust. Waste from the trucks will be loaded into intermodal shipping containers. The containers will be sealed shut before they are moved outside. Specialized equipment will load the containers onto trains (or other vehicles). Self-haul customers in cars and small trucks will not be able to use the site.



Why is the Corgiat site the preferred site?

The new intermodal facility will be fully enclosed.



The site for the new intermodal transfer facility must meet very specific criteria. SPU conducted a detailed analysis of site alternatives throughout the City. Initially, over 1000 potential locations were identified through a computer search. The sites were then gradually narrowed to the four best alternatives based on site visits and advice from experts in the design of intermodal facilities.

Each of the final four sites underwent an assessment of life cycle costs, suitability for a facility with specific design parameters, future facility performance, and social and environmental factors. SPU selected the 16-acre Corgiat site as the preferred location. Some of the reasons include its size, the industrial zoning within and around the site, its access to rail tracks and configuration in relation to the tracks, its proximity to I-5 and arterials, and its adaptability to evolving solid waste needs.

How has the public been involved in this process?

SPU is committed to seeking public input on major projects like this one. During the development of the *Solid Waste Facilities Master Plan*, SPU held two rounds of public meetings to gather input on the range of options for improving Seattle's solid waste facilities. SPU staff also met with district, neighborhood, and business councils as well as solid waste haulers, SPU employees, and other stakeholders. Public input helped shape the content of the final plan.

SPU then conducted an environmental review of four alternative sites for the new intermodal transfer facility. Two more rounds of public meetings were organized to scope the environmental review, and then public hearings were held to gather comments on its findings. A final environmental impact statement was published in August, 2005.

How will SPU work with nearby neighborhoods and property owners?

SPU is committed to building and operating a facility that is a good neighbor to nearby communities. This spring, SPU will hold meetings with Georgetown and South Beacon Hill residents to hear their concerns about the facility and to identify concrete actions that SPU can take to address them. These meetings will be announced on the project website, in local papers, and through mailed notices. SPU will also work with property owners and tenants at the site to help them relocate, ideally to sites nearby.

For more information...

Please visit the SPU website at http://www.seattle.gov/util/About_SPU/index.asp, or email swfmp.spu@seattle.gov. For questions about upcoming meetings, please call Feloneze Harris at 733-9851.